

Abstract

An apparatus and method for controlling an actuable occupant protection system (40) in a passenger compartment (12) of a vehicle (10) includes a camera (72) configured for obtaining an image of a viewable field (78) within the passenger compartment (12) of the vehicle (10). At least one pattern (84, 86) is associated with vehicle structures (22, 24, 26) located within the viewable field (78). The portions of the obtained image associated with vehicle structures (22, 24, 26) having the pattern (84, 86) are removed from the image so as to obtain information regarding occupancy of the viewable field (78). The actuable occupant protection system (40) is controlled in response to the obtained occupancy information.